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Course Development Grant Report
Innovative Course Development Grant 2010-2011

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Teaching Performance Seminars On-Line
Courses – EELB 519, EELB 529, EELB 539

Project Goals

To provide students with timely, clear information for completing the Teaching Performance Assessment (CalTPA) task assigned in the assessment seminar.

To provide students with uniform instructional quality and support by creating on-line courses.

Implementation

The assessment seminars, EELB 519, EELB 529 and EELB 539, were offered in an on-line hybrid format each quarter, Fall 2010, Winter 2011 and Spring 2011 at both the Palm Desert and San Bernardino campuses with a total enrollment of 470 students.

Project Description

This project redesigned three required two-unit assessment seminars in the Multiple Subject Credential Program that are offered every quarter to instruct and support credential program students as they complete State-required teaching performance assessments using the CalTPA. Two major needs drove the plan to redesign the assessment seminars into on-line courses – access and uniform quality of instruction. The first, access, is the need to make these courses available every quarter including summer sessions and to make them available at the San Bernardino and Palm Desert campuses. When the Cajon Pass closed last year on an assessment seminar class day, students who could not attend class did not have the same access to timely information as students who did.

The second need, uniform quality of instruction, is the need to be sure that all students have the same instruction and support for completing the teaching performance assessment tasks without variance by instructor or quarter taken. The CalTPA requires the submitted teaching performance assessments to be scored by State-trained and calibrated scorers and ideally requires that each section of the course be taught identically quarter after quarter so students have the same input for understanding the teaching performance assessment task requirements. The best way to achieve uniform high quality is to provide on-line instructional modules that will be the same for all students. This creates a level playing field for all students submitting the tasks – we won't have more or less helpful instructors or variance due to whether the student takes the course at noon when they are fresh or at 6pm when they are

tired. This helped to standardize the administration of the CalTPA on our campus so we more clearly address the requirements of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

The lesson modules that made up the on-line instruction were hosted on Blackboard course sites and students could access them and complete them at their own pace as long as they meet the assessment task submission deadline. Each module included self-assessments with feedback so students could monitor their progress in understanding the task components. Additional on-line features include email access to the instructor for questions and announcements to share answers with all students in the course. Each Blackboard site also has a Discussion Board for students to post questions and a list of Internet resources students can access as needed when completing the assessment task such as the Iris Center website for teaching children with special needs or the PT3 website developed by Dr. Bonnie Pillar for teaching English learners.

How Implemented

While the goal was a 100% on-line course, the implementation became a hybrid course with a first class session to orient students to the CalTPA task and the course website. An optional class session was also scheduled in the fourth week to allow students to meet face to face with the instructor for help if they choose to. A final class session was scheduled to return task scores, coach students who needed to resubmit the task and have students complete evaluations and surveys.

The course content was delivered in a set of instructional modules using Power Point presentations with audio. Each presentation was audio-recorded using Audacity and edited to produce clear presentations with adequate volume. The Power Points and audio recordings were assembled using Articulate. Instructional modules were linked to the Blackboard course website which also included all course policies, schedules and resources. A self-assessment called a Self Check was developed for each instructional module to allow students feedback on their understanding of the lesson and provide re-teach opportunities for students who had misunderstandings. Discussion Board, instructor announcements and email were used to respond to student questions. Students were encouraged to use Discussion Board for questions so the answers would be available to all students. Students were told if they did email the instructor with questions, the instructor might respond by putting the student's question on Discussion Board and responding there.

The following timeline reflects project implementation.

June 2010 Students in EELB 519,529 and 539 completed a course satisfaction survey.

July 2010 Course content was written into lesson modules for each course. Blackboard websites were developed for each course including policies and resources.

August 2010 The audio portion of the presentations was recorded and the self-assessments were developed with feedback about students' progress in understanding the assessment tasks.

September 2010 The Blackboard websites, lesson modules and evaluation surveys were piloted from a number of different platforms to be sure that students can successfully access all materials.

Fall Quarter 2010 All three courses were offered as hybrid on-line courses. I was the instructor for the San Bernardino courses and Dr. Ruth Norton was the instructor for the Palm Desert courses. Students were surveyed at the end of the quarter. I modified the courses and added a Frequently Asked Questions resource for their continued use in Winter 2011 and Spring 2011.

Project Results

Two sources of data were described in the grant application – pass rates of students in the assessment seminars and student surveys before and after implementation of the on-line courses. Generally the transition to on-line instruction did not impact pass rates on the CalTPA and resulted in greater student satisfaction with all aspects of the course.

Pass Rates

The assessment seminar CalTPA tasks are scored anonymously by a group of trained and calibrated scorers. The course instructor is one of the scorers but a group of ten or more scorers is used to ensure fair and equitable scoring. The pass rates for Spring 2010 when the courses met face-to-face and Fall 2010 and Winter 2011 when the courses were on-line are tabled below. The only change in pass rates occurred in Winter 2011 in one course. There are several factors that could account for this change and are being examined.

Spring 2010	Enrollment	% Passed
EELB 519	30	90%
EELB 529	46	96%
EELB 539	84	98%
Total	160	96%
Fall 2010		
EELB 519	79	95%
EELB 529	34	91%
EELB 539	45	98%
Total	158	92%
Winter 2011		
EELB 519	49	86%
EELB 529	74	95%
EELB 539	35	97%
Total	158	88%

Student Surveys

Students were surveyed as they completed the assessment seminars and asked to rate how satisfied they were with aspects of the course and which parts of the course were most useful. The Spring 2010 students were enrolled in face-to-face classes and were asked about their needs in the course and their concerns about taking the course on-line. These responses were used in the design of the courses in creating clear information, feedback and quick responses to student questions.

Spring 2010 – face to face classes

How Satisfied With..... Mean rating reported Scale 1 (Very Unsatisfied) to 4 (Very Satisfied)	EELB 519 N=29	EELB 529 N=47	EELB 539 N=84
1. Timely information needed to do the task	3.21	2.50	2.85
2. Clear information I could refer back to	3.07	2.47	2.89
3. Easy to find answers to questions	2.76	2.30	2.97
4. Required class sessions were useful	2.75	2.98	2.44
Most Useful Part of the Course (check as many as apply)			
Information from the instructor	20%	13%	18%
Information from class members in class	39%	45%	42%
Information from the TPA Handbook	32%	32%	29%
Email responses from the instructor to questions	8%	9%	10%
Greatest Need in the Class (choose one)			
Clear information about what I needed to do	33%	44%	30%
Feedback that I was on the right track	27%	13%	14%
Quick answers to my questions	8%	15%	15%
Reassurance that most people pass	10%	4%	10%
Help to be sure I understood the prompts	15%	14%	12.5%
Encouragement to stay on the timeline	7%	10%	12.5%

On-line course? Percentage saying Yes	80%	62%	76%
Concerns about on-line course?			
No Concerns	17%	11%	23%
Coping with technology	6%	8%	8%
Getting clear information for the task	24%	28%	24%
Getting feedback or reassurance	26%	11%	15%
Getting questions answered	15%	30%	16%
Staying on the timeline to complete the task	11%	13%	13%

Summary – Students expressed dissatisfaction with the clarity and timeliness of the information provided in the class. They were also dissatisfied with the ease of finding answers to their questions and the class sessions they were required to attend. The most useful parts of the course were the help they got from other class members and the TPA Handbook. Note that getting help from classmates is a problem for the administration of the CalTPA since collaboration with classmates is strongly discouraged in this assessment.

The greatest needs were clear information, help to be sure the task prompts were understood and feedback. A strong majority of each seminar endorsed the idea of offering the course on-line. Concerns about taking the course on-line centered on getting clear task information and getting questions answered.

Fall 2010/Winter 2011 – hybrid on-line classes

The fall and winter courses were taught as hybrid on-line courses and students completed exit surveys in the last class session. They were asked to rate satisfaction with various qualities and features of the course, indicate what they found useful in the course and describe how they found answers for their questions including how long it took to find answers.

How Satisfied With..... Mean rating reported Scale 1 (Very Unsatisfied) to 4 (Very Satisfied)	EELB 519 Fall N=76/ Winter N=45	EELB 529 Fall N=31/ Winter N=67	EELB 539 Fall N=41/ Winter N=33
1. Timely information I needed to do the task	3.42/ 3.30	3.55/ 3.19	3.41/ 3.73
2. Clear information I could refer back to	3.25/ 3.33	3.48/ 3.22	3.44/ 3.58
3. Easy to find answers to	3.30/ 2.91	3.35/ 3.11	3.37/ 3.61

questions			
4. Instructional modules were useful	3.35/ 3.52	3.45/ 3.39	3.21/ 3.64
5. Self-checks were useful	3.16/ 3.31	3.24/ 3.22	2.92/ 3.25
6. External links were useful	3.42/ 3.38	3.23/ 3.21	3.17/ 3.26
The most useful parts of the course (check as many as apply)			
Instructional modules	23%/ 29%	23%/ 29%	20%/ 24%
Self-checks	10%/ 13%	15%/ 10%	5%/ 10%
Course information	12%/ 9%	18%/ 15%	23%/ 20%
External links	15%/ 21%	9%/ 10%	11%/ 12%
Discussion Board	25%/ 11%	17%/ 16%	18%/ 19%
Class schedule	13%/ 15%	15%/ 17%	17%/ 14%
I did not use the website	2%/ 2%	2%/ 4%	7%/ 1%
If you had questions, how did you find answers?			
Discussion Board	28%/ 20%	22%/ 19%	16%/ 21%
Emailing the instructor	11%/ 14%	25%/ 23%	22%/ 28%
Reviewing the modules	24%/ 29%	23%/19%	11%/ 19%
Reviewing announcements on the website	11%/ 7%	13%/ 9%	16%/8%
Asking classmates	26%/ 20%	12%/ 23%	31%/ 22%
Other	CTC website	Ask other professors*	Ask other professors*
I had not questions	0/ 10%	3%/ 7%	4%/ 1%
Were questions answered in a timely fashion? % Yes	95%/ 82%	100%/ 96%	86%/ 100%
Generally, how long did it take to get an answer?			
Minutes	26%/ 43%	35%/ 15%	17%/ 28%
Within 24 hours	50%/ 24%	49%/ 48%	42%/ 56%
2 to 3 days	18%/ 24%	17%/ 26%	21%/ 12%

A week	4%/ 5%	0/ 7%	21%/ 4%
Never	2%/ 5%	0/ 4%	0/ 0

* Note: Asking methods course instructors for specific information needed in the task is promoted as a strategy for certain questions.

Summary – The increased level of student satisfaction with the courses above the level in Spring 2010 is evident in all responses to the satisfaction ratings. Students selection of the most useful parts of the courses is widely distributed which suggests that the features created in the courses meet the diverse needs of the students – the course offers support for all kinds of students. Of some concern is the small percentage of students (1 – 7%) who report not using the Blackboard course site. This could be a factor in the pass rates in the course.

Special attention was paid to the issue of getting questions answered since the timeline on completing the CalTPA task is inflexible and getting stuck because you couldn't get a questions answered would be very frustrating. In the syllabus there is a statement that questions would be answered within 72 hours (3 days). In almost all classes students report that questions were answered within 3 days 93% of the time or better. Students also strongly endorse that their questions were answered in a timely fashion. Getting information from classmates decreased significantly from Spring 2010 but remains a factor.

As a general conclusion, students are satisfied with the on-line courses and get their questions answered quickly. They use all features of the courses and many spontaneously wrote in that they appreciate the courses being offered on-line.

Future Plans

Beginning in Winter 2012, the assessment seminars will convert to a new set of one unit courses and a fourth seminar will be added to support the fourth CalTPA task. The new course numbers will be EELB 520 A, B, C and D. They will continue to be offered as hybrid on-line courses and the fourth course will be developed as an on-line course as well.

The development of these courses as hybrid on-line courses is especially important in the coming year as a greater variety of professors want to teach these courses due to course load availability issues. It is important that the equity of access to support for completing the CalTPA not vary due to the experience of the instructor. Experience with these on-line courses may also encourage the development of other credential courses as hybrid on-line courses that would support our ability to recruit students in outlying areas.